

Argument 5

Infant Baptisers Claim that Circumcision Was a Seal of the Covenant to Infants – and Baptism Is the Same

Infant baptisers appeal to Romans 4:11, the verse which speaks of circumcision as the seal which God gave to Abraham – the seal of the justification which he had received by faith, and received long before he was circumcised. The verse reads:

And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised.

From this, infant baptisers argue that their babies should be baptised to seal their interest in the covenant. I have already noted that baptism does not figure in the context of Romans 4:11. Amazing, then, that so many claim so much for a verse which says nothing – nothing — about the subject in hand. With that in mind, let us look at the claim that baptism is a seal for the infants of believers.¹

Circumcision had a spiritual meaning in the Old Testament, in addition to its national and physical aspects. It was a sign to all the Israelites, a sign of what needed to happen to them spiritually. But, for one man – and one man only – it was more than a sign. It was also a seal. Circumcision served as both a sign and a seal to Abraham. What is more, for Abraham it was not a sign of what he *needed* to experience, but of what he had *already* experienced. Circumcision was an outward rite which brought home to his heart and mind what had happened to him spiritually. Circumcision illustrated it to him, and sealed it to him. He had been justified by faith, and his circumcision sealed this to him in some way; it made his justification real to him, it verified, it confirmed, it guaranteed it to him. The circumcision did not

¹ Many Baptists also misuse the verse to talk, wrongly, about baptism as a seal – for believers, of course, not infants. But, as I will show, baptism is not a *seal* for anybody.

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justify Abraham; it did not contribute to his justification; he was not justified because of or through circumcision. The truth is, *he was circumcised because he was justified*.² As John Murray put it: ‘If circumcision signified faith, the faith must be conceived of as existing prior to the signification given and, in a way still more apparent, a seal or authentication presupposes the existence of the thing sealed and the seal does not add to the content of the thing sealed’.³ Let me stress this. Abraham’s faith and justification existed before he was sealed by circumcision. It could be no different. Unless he had been already justified, his justification could not have been sealed to him.

There is a difference between a sign and a seal. A sign points to something. We all know the purpose of the signpost on a road or footpath; it marks out the way.⁴ A sign is an indicator, an illustration, a source of instruction.⁵ But a seal is more, much more. It actually

² Justification... ‘does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness. How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also, and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised’ (Rom. 4:9-12). Incidentally, though it is not relevant to the subject in hand, Paul then goes on to show that the law played no more part in Abraham’s justification than circumcision (Rom. 4:13-16). And all this applies, as Paul makes very clear, not only to Abraham, but to all who are justified. Infant baptisers, who so strongly link circumcision and baptism, and who attribute so much to both – both are the seal, they say, of justification – not only go further than Scripture in both cases, they risk – to put it no stronger – they risk obscuring the vital point Paul stresses in Rom. 4; namely, nothing we can do, nor any rite we can observe, makes any contribution to justification – circumcision, law, prayers, baptism...

³ John Murray Vol.1 p137.

⁴ Care is needed. A signpost points out the way which has to be taken. Circumcision pointed the Israelites to what needed to happen to them. But baptism is not a sign in this sense. Baptism points to something which has already happened to believers.

⁵ Take the stones carried from the Jordan and set up as a sign to the Israelites. Note the question: ‘What do these stones *mean* to you?’; not: ‘What do these

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verifies, it confirms, guarantees and makes real the experience of something. John Murray again:

It is usual [right, essential] to discover a distinction between a sign and a seal; a sign points to the existence of that which it signifies, whereas a seal authenticates, confirms, and guarantees the genuineness of that which is signified... The seal is more than definitive of that in which the sign consisted; it adds the thought of authentication. And the seal is that which God himself appended to assure Abraham that the faith he exercised in God's promise was accepted by God to the end of fulfilling to Abraham the promise which he believed.⁶

stones *do* to you?' (Josh. 4:1-9). The stones told, reminded, instructed, informed Israel; they did not convey any grace. But they were not to be despised because they served merely(!) as a reminder, a memorial. The Passover was precisely the same: 'This day shall be to you a memorial' (Ex. 12:14). Christ's command in the supper is: 'Do this in remembrance of me' (Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24-25). Why the need for such reminders? Because forgetfulness is so common a trait – both among the Israelites and believers (Deut. 8:2-19; Ps. 78:11; 106:13; Matt. 16:9; Luke 22:19; 2 Pet. 1:12-15; 3:1-2).

⁶ John Murray Vol.1 p138. A seal is a proof, an evidence, a guarantee, that which brings legal closure to all debate, preventing any addition to, or subtraction from, a transaction. Christ was sealed (John 6:27) by evident signs of the Spirit (Mark 2:10; John 5:20,36-37; 8:18; 10:37-38; 14:11; Acts 2:22). Jeremiah sealed the deed of purchase (Jer. 32:10-14). The Corinthians were the seal of Paul's apostleship, its proof, evidence, certification (1 Cor. 9:2). The stone of Christ's tomb was sealed (Matt. 27:66), as is the bottomless pit (Rev. 20:3). God's elect are sealed; he knows them, they are marked by him, they are protected and kept secure by him (2 Tim. 2:19; Rev. 7:3). Paul's completion of the transfer of the gift of money was a seal (Rom. 15:28). See also Deut. 32:34; Job. 9:7; 14:17; Dan. 8:26; 12:4; Rev. 5:1.

Lloyd-Jones: 'A seal is that which authenticates... establishes the authenticity, the validity, the truth of a document or statement. Another meaning... is that it is a mark of ownership... A seal is also used for the purpose of security... There are three main meanings to this term "sealing" – authenticity and authority, ownership, and security and safety... [which are] authenticated by intelligible signs... confirmed... It means that we can be authenticated, that it can be established by intelligible signs that we are indeed the children of God, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ... Sealing does not make us Christians, but it authenticates the fact, as a seal always does... It is God's action, in which he bears witness that we are his children, that he is our Father, and that we are "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ". It is God's authentication of the fact that we really belong to

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So far so good. However, from this, infant baptisers go on to maintain that all the infants who were circumcised, like Abraham they also received not only the sign but the seal. Bannerman: ‘As the seal, then, of the covenant according to which Abraham was justified, the ordinance plainly testified that it was the covenant of grace; and, when

him’ (Lloyd-Jones: *Ephesians 1* pp245-265). Lloyd-Jones was here speaking of the sealing with the Spirit. Without agreeing with him on the baptism of the Spirit, what he said on the nature of a seal – the sealing with the Spirit – is admirable. The Spirit himself is the seal (2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13-14; 4:30; see also Rom. 8:15,23; 2 Cor. 5:5; Gal. 4:6).

The tragedy is, many (both Baptists and infant baptisers) apply the word ‘seal’ (and therefore, inevitably, its connotations, however much they try to distance themselves from them) to baptism, and do so without a shred of scripture to support it. By this, they in effect teach that baptism guarantees, authenticates and confirms the one baptised as a true believer. Lloyd-Jones, for instance, himself said baptism is a seal and a sign, the seal being far more important: ‘The great thing about baptism is that it is a sealing by God of that which I know has already happened to me... Much more important than the sign is the sealing... The important thing about baptism is the seal’. From this Lloyd-Jones argued the opposite to infant baptisers: Since, as he thought, it is a seal, no infant should be baptised. If it had been only(!) a sign, then infants, he thought, could have been baptised (Lloyd-Jones: *The Church* p43; see also *Romans 3:20 – 4:25* p187). Strange, also, therefore, that he could say: ‘Baptism is nothing but a seal’ (Lloyd-Jones: *Romans 3:20 – 4:25* p187). Nothing *but* a seal? In light of what he said about a seal, and although he was arguing against baptismal regeneration, how could he use the phrase, ‘nothing *but* a seal’? The point will be made clear if the phrase ‘nothing but a seal’ is used when talking of John 6:27; 1 Cor. 9:2, 2 Tim. 2:19; Rev. 9:4; 20:3. Try it and see, reader! The fact that a seal is so final, definite, dogmatic and far-reaching, is the very reason it *cannot* be applied to baptism.

Finally, to clear up any misunderstanding, leaving aside the talk of a seal, let me return to a point I have already made. Whereas circumcision was a sign to Israel of what needed to happen, this is not so with the two New Testament signs – baptism and the Lord’s supper. These point to a reality, something which exists, not an aspiration. Going back to the sign of the stones I mentioned above – the stones commemorated the crossing of the Jordan which had already occurred. Take the Lord’s supper. The symbols point to the actual accomplishment of redemption, the finished work of Christ, and the believer’s reception of it. As for baptism, the sign is not to be treated as some sort of wish for the person being baptised; nor is it meant to guarantee what is going to happen to him; it is meant to illustrate – not guarantee – what has already happened to him.

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administered to infants eight days old, it no less plainly indicated they were interested in that covenant'.⁷ Legg: 'This sign and seal of the new birth and of justification was given to infants',⁸ to all the infant seed of the Israelites, he meant. Owen alleged that 'the spiritual privilege of a right unto and a participation of the initial seal of the covenant was granted by God unto the infant seed of Abraham'.⁹

Now these statements constitute a huge leap of logic. Is it warranted? Certainly not! Romans 4:11 says that Abraham received circumcision as a sign and a seal. As the above-quoted examples show, infant baptisers argue from this statement to claim that *all* who were circumcised received that same seal. What Scripture gives them the authority to say this? They cannot find a single verse! For which other person does the Bible say circumcision was a seal? It never says it of anyone else other than Abraham. There is no other place in Scripture where it is ever said. To read the books written by infant baptisers, one would think it appeared on every other page! The fact is, we never read that *any* other Israelite viewed his circumcision in this way. And we certainly cannot say that *every* Israelite viewed his circumcision in that way. It is impossible to say that all the circumcised regarded it as a seal. In fact there is a valid – unanswerable – case against it, which I will bring out in the next paragraph. Certainly, infant baptisers cannot say that all circumcised infants were sealed. One thing we do know is – and it is absolutely beyond all doubt – many of the Israelites, even though they were circumcised and born of a father who had been circumcised, were not spiritual Israelites, they were not in the covenant in a spiritual way, they never were justified. Therefore they could not possibly have been sealed; there was nothing to seal in their case! How could justification by faith be assured, authenticated, confirmed and guaranteed to those who never were justified? and never would be justified? Both the argument and its conclusion are nonsensical.¹⁰

⁷ Bannerman p73.

⁸ Legg p5.

⁹ Legg p3; Owen: *Of Infant in Works* Vol.16 p259.

¹⁰ Circumcision, as I have repeatedly argued, was a *sign* – a pointer to what *should* happen – to the Israelites. It pointed them to the need for regeneration, faith and repentance, and thence justification. Pratt: 'Physical circumcision pointed to the need for inward spiritual circumcision... [It] expressed externally what was required [quite! – not what had already happened] to be

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Circumcision was a seal to Abraham because he was a believer and was justified before he was circumcised.¹¹ It made his justification real

true of the inner person' (John H. Armstrong pp45-46,68). Very well. I agree. How, then, could it serve as a seal? In Abraham's case – and in his case alone – it pointed to what had already happened to him. Hence, it was a *seal* to Abraham – but only to him. Sadly, most, if not all, infant baptisers – and Baptists – simply take it for granted that circumcision was a seal to all. What a massive assumption! Utterly unjustified! And they do the same now for baptism. Newton has offered the only justification for it that I know of, but he failed to deal with the main point. He faced the stricture: 'Some, I scarcely know on what principle, have objected to our speaking of baptism as "a seal" on the part of God'. They say: 'We must beware of exalting baptism... into too high a place... If we say that baptism is to be regarded as a "seal", appointed of God, there is danger of its being supposed that the promise of God is invalid without it, and thus baptism would be made indispensably necessary to salvation'. I agree with them! But it is worse than that. If baptism is a seal – and there is no scripture for it – and Newton certainly made no pretence of offering any – then it *is* a seal, and those who are baptised are invariably sealed, with all connotations of the word. Their baptism guarantees, proves, certifies and secures to them the grace signified. If, as Newton said, 'baptism *is* on the part of God a seal... whereby he visibly pledges his faithfulness and his power *to...* effectuate the results that are in the sign signified' (Newton pp19,126-130, emphasis mine), then baptism does it! For the reasons I have given, this cannot be. Newton did not deal with the point I am making. As for infant baptism being a seal to infants, surely Pratt delivered a fatal blow to his own case when he admitted: "Furthermore... the sacraments do not guarantee that their recipients will receive the blessings they offer... Those who receive baptism are to be washed not only outwardly but inwardly as well' (John H. Armstrong pp63,68). I cannot see, therefore, how baptism can be a seal to infants – if it shouts from the roof-tops that this infant being baptised *needs to be* washed spiritually. It could be a seal only if the baptism gave the definite and absolute assurance – sealed it – that the infant had already been spiritually washed – or was now being spiritually washed in the baptism. So, this is where infant baptisers end up. On the one hand, they tell the recipients of baptism they are sealed by their baptism. On the other hand, as Pratt stated: 'The sacraments do not guarantee that their recipients will receive the blessings they offer'! If this sentiment formed the last line in all the legal documents and guarantees we depend on in this life, it would make them worthless – worth less than the paper cluttering our deed boxes. How much more serious when we are talking about spiritual – eternal – things.

¹¹ 'Circumcision... was given to Abraham as a sign [and a seal] to [illustrate and] authenticate the imputation of righteousness to him fourteen years

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to him, it guaranteed it – the justification which existed beforehand. This is the point I hinted at above. John Murray put it plainly enough: ‘A seal... presupposes the existence of the thing sealed’. Reader, notice this: It ‘presupposes the existence of’. Exactly!¹² That is the precise doctrine of Romans 4:11. On the basis of this verse – and it is the only verse in the entire Bible which speaks of the subject – it can be properly argued that the sealing could only take place *where the man was already justified by faith*. And there is only one man who was circumcised under those conditions as far as we know – Abraham! To jump from Romans 4:11, and say that the seal aspect of circumcision applied to all who were circumcised, is, to say the least, an audacious speculation. It is totally wrong.¹³ All that can be deduced from Romans 4:11 is that Abraham received, viewed and understood his circumcision as a seal to him. His circumcision confirmed to him that he was justified by faith. Quite right, too! After all, he *was* justified! As far as circumcision being a seal, that is as far as anyone can go; that is the end of the matter. Or ought to be!

But, when arguing for baptism as a seal, infant baptisers show no such restraint.¹⁴ In addition to the examples I have already given, take Berkhof: ‘If it be said, as it is sometimes in our Reformed literature,

before... Circumcision... was that Abraham should have the promise made sure to him... Justification is the basis upon which circumcision is given [to Abraham]’ (Lloyd-Jones: *Romans 3:20 – 4:25* p185). All this was true for Abraham – but for nobody else.

¹² As long as ‘presuppose’ is not reduced to mere assumption or less. Abraham was sealed because he *was* justified; there was no guesswork or vague hope about it. I would use ‘works on the basis of’; ‘a seal *works on the basis of* the existence of the thing sealed’.

¹³ Who was circumcised first? The day Abraham was circumcised, so was Ishmael, and ‘all who were born in [Abraham’s] house and all who were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham’s house... that very same day’ (Gen. 17:23-27). Were they all sealed that ‘very same day’? Indeed, were they all justified by faith? If so, had they been justified, like Abraham, before they were sealed by circumcision? or, unlike Abraham, after they were sealed? The seal was a guarantee, a confirmation, to Abraham, of his justification. Was it the same for all the others?

¹⁴ The points I make here apply equally to Baptists who think baptism is a seal – even if they do not explicitly make the same claims as infant baptisers. The fact is, if baptism is a seal, it is a seal! And this goes for both infant and believer’s baptism.

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that baptism seals the promise(s) of God, this does not merely mean that it vouches for the truth of the promise, but that it assures the recipients that they are the appointed heirs of the promised blessings'.¹⁵ Really? As I explained above, as one who baptises only believers, and who does so with as much care as he can, and does not regard the ordinance as a seal, I would not dare to 'assure' any person I baptised that he or she was an 'appointed heir of the promised blessings'. I can only say to the person that, on the evidence presented to me, I baptise on the grounds that I believe he or she is regenerate, but this is only certainly known by God. As for infant baptisers, however, they seem able to assure those whom they baptise that they are heirs of the promised blessings, and that the baptism has sealed it. In particular, they seem able to assure infants (and the parents) of this. Really?¹⁶

Berkhof appreciated that this put him into a quandary. He backed off – or tried to: 'This does not necessarily mean that they are already in principle in possession of the promised good, though this is possible and may even be probable, but certainly means that they are appointed heirs and will receive the heritage, unless they show themselves unworthy of it and refuse it'.¹⁷ Some seal this! Some guarantee! It is guaranteed – said Berkhof – *unless* they show themselves unworthy and refuse it! They are sealed *but...* Where is the New Testament justification for this kind of special pleading? Do infant baptisers believe baptism is a seal, a guarantee, a certification, or do they not? Does it assure the recipient of salvation, or does it not? Of course not, as they admit. I have already quoted Pratt, but it bears repeating: 'The sacraments do not guarantee that their recipients will receive the blessings they [are said, by the Reformed, to] offer'.¹⁸ The truth is, Reformed infant-baptisers have to weaken, and draw back from, their assertions because the consequences are unthinkable.¹⁹ But, in drawing back, in weakening their argument, they are prepared to say that some

¹⁵ Berkhof p641.

¹⁶ See end note on p149 for excursus: 'By linking baptism and assurance, many lose contact with reality'.

¹⁷ Berkhof p641.

¹⁸ John H. Armstrong p63. In other words, baptism is a seal – but not always! But a seal is always a seal, or it is no seal at all.

¹⁹ See end note on p150 for excursus: 'Sibbes on infant baptism as a seal'.

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of the infants who ‘are appointed heirs and will receive the heritage’ do not receive it because ‘they show themselves unworthy of it and refuse it’. In other words, God may appoint these infants to salvation, and by his authority they receive the seal of assurance that they have it, but they do not actually receive it because they prove themselves unworthy of it! A question suggests itself: Do infant baptisers believe in salvation by divine grace or by human merit? Furthermore, we are told, these infants, although appointed by God to receive salvation, do not receive it because they ‘refuse it’. What is this? Calvinism or what? My question is: Has God appointed these infants – who are sealed by their baptism – to salvation, or not? Can we have a clear, unequivocal statement to settle it once and for all? Instead of tinkering with their argument, infant baptisers ought to jettison it. Or else they ought to have the courage of their convictions and say that all baptised infants *are* sealed, guaranteed and confirmed as regenerate. Then, at least, we would all know where we stand.

Let us come to *facts*. In the New Testament, believers are sealed by the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13-14; 4:30). Infant baptisers like to claim that baptism and the Lord’s supper are seals; clearly, it fits in with their defence of infant baptism. But what verse says that baptism and the Lord’s supper are seals for believers? Not one! It is pure invention! The only sealing for believers, with the New Testament meaning of the word, is the sealing with the Holy Spirit. And there is none of Berkhof’s *unless* about that sealing! *It is* a seal. *That* is the New Testament equivalent to what is said of Abraham in Romans 4:11; not water baptism or the supper. There is no basis whatsoever in that verse for the baptism of infants. It has nothing to do with the subject of baptism. For infant baptisers to use Romans 4:11 in order to sustain their practice is a travesty of scriptural exposition.

David Clarkson, Owen’s colleague and successor, argued that just as ‘an unbeliever has nothing to do with the promises... and... nothing to do with the covenant, so neither’ has he anything to do ‘with the seals of it. What right has he to the seals?’ he asked. ‘The covenant is evidence for heaven, under the hand and seal of God; a deed of gift under the seal of heaven. How does the seal belong to him, who has nothing to do with the deed?’ he demanded. Allowing for a moment the mistaken view that the ordinances are a seal, Clarkson was right; a man must be a believer before he can receive the seal of faith. That

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much is obvious. Clarkson then distinguished between what he called ‘the audible promise’ – the gospel preached – and ‘the visible promise’ – the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s supper. He argued:

Now he that [is an unbeliever] has no right to the audible promise, that which offers pardon and life to the ear, has no right to the visible promise, which offers pardon and life to the eye, since the very same thing is tendered in both. As we must not apply the audible promise to an unbeliever, so must we not apply the visible promise; there is the very same reason for both. The promise belongs to believers.

As I say, in his main argument, Clarkson was correct; unbelievers have no interest in Christ, they are not united in covenant to him, the promises of pardon and life do not belong to them.²⁰ As a consequence, unbelievers have no right whatsoever to the ordinances. Therefore unbelievers cannot be baptised; they cannot take the Lord’s supper. Just so. Unfortunately, in the light of what he had declared, Clarkson then made a very odd statement: ‘The promise belongs to believers and their seed, both visible and audible promises’ belong to them, ‘for they’ – both sets of promises – ‘should never be separated’.²¹ He went on quite properly to say, however:

Neither of them belongs to unbelievers, nor their seed, for they are not the heirs of promise. And to make over the inheritance, or the seals and evidences of it to them, would be to give the heir’s inheritance, in its sealed evidences, to pretenders and intruders, to those to whom Christ in his will and testament never bequeathed it – an injustice that we should use all our care to avoid. While a man is visibly in unbelief, nothing can be sealed to him but condemnation, because he has no evidence for anything else.²²

What did Clarkson mean? He was right when he categorically stated that the covenant promises and the ordinances do not belong to unbelievers. (To put it positively, they belong only to believers). But, on the other hand, he was wrong when he asserted they do belong to

²⁰ I am not, of course, saying the commands, invitations and promises of the gospel should not be issued to unbelievers, but the promises *belong* only to believers. They are appropriated by *faith*.

²¹ Does this mean the babies of believers can have the Lord’s supper in addition to baptism? As we shall see, most – but not all – infant baptisers draw back from this. Why?

²² Clarkson p93.

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believers *and their children*. In particular, he was wrong when he claimed that Christ bequeathed both the promises and the ordinances to the children of believers. He asserted that believers' children are heirs of Christ's will and testament. Did he mean this? Really? In that case, what of those children of believers who prove to be unbelievers at the last – did Christ bequeath the covenant to them? Are they heirs of Christ's promise? They have received its 'sealed evidences'; it is theirs! And yet they, like all other unbelievers, will be damned for ever. Imagine it! Sinners who have received the seal of the covenant, supposedly bequeathed to them by Christ, guaranteed that they are in the covenant, yet separated from him for ever in hell. The idea is incredible!²³

And why are the children of unbelievers to be considered 'visibly in unbelief', while the children of Christians are to be treated as believers? Are not all children – all children – born in sin and unbelief? Now the New Testament teaches us that until a sinner believes in Christ, he has no right whatsoever to the new covenant nor the ordinances. The central theme of Clarkson's own reasoning was correctly based upon it. Sadly, he ruined all when he allowed some, who have not believed, a right to covenant promises and the ordinances. He did this when he included the children of believers in both. But since no child can be considered a believer, it is a gross abuse to allow any child, as any unbeliever, to partake of the ordinances. As Clarkson himself observed, such a step is wrong; we should do all we can to avoid it. In short, children should not be baptised.

Charles Hodge commented on Ephesians 2:4. He rightly said that all children 'are born in a state of condemnation. They need redemption from the moment of their birth'. Reader, what conclusion do you think Hodge drew from this? He wrote – astonishingly – 'and therefore the seal of redemption is applied to them in baptism, which

²³ How demeaning to God! In ordinary commerce, if we make a claim under guarantee and the guarantor does not stand by his word and promise, there will be ructions to play. Quite right, too. Well, will God not stand by his seal and guarantee? The very suggestion that he will not is blasphemous. The flaw, of course, is for men to tell all (any!) baptised infants (or their parents!) that they – the infants – are sealed.

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otherwise would be a senseless ceremony'.²⁴ In other words, just because they need redemption, they are to be given the guarantee that they are redeemed! What a contradiction. What utter confusion of thought. If that does not demonstrate that infant baptism is 'a senseless ceremony', nothing will.

But it may be much worse than that. Did Hodge mean something else? Did he mean that the infant needs redemption, and by his baptism he actually gets it? If so, his words were Popish. What now of those who believe such error? And even if Hodge did not intend to say anything of the sort, note the real risk that somebody reading his words on infant baptism might believe it. This is my concern throughout this book; I am not interested in an academic discussion about infant baptism; it is the eternal consequences of the practice which disturb me. And all who teach that baptism is a seal, ought to think about the eternal consequences of their claim.

²⁴ Charles Hodge: *Ephesians* p111.